United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/972
11 September 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General welcomes Israeli Defence Ministry announcement to release 51 Arab prisoners.

- Secretary-General, on last day of two-day official visit to Tehran, holds meeting with President and Foreign Minister of Iran.

- Annual NGO Conference organized by Department of Public Information opens at Headquarters; to focus on role in emerging world order.

- Secretary-General welcomes Guatemalan Government's recognition of independent and sovereign State of Belize.

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A United Nations official told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had welcomed the Israeli Defence Ministry's announcement to free 51 Arab prisoners in an effort to resolve the hostage crisis.

The official said Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar was encouraged by "this further step" and that he would now redouble his efforts to find a solution to the problem of all hostages, detainees and missing persons.

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On the second day of a two-day official visit at the invitation of the Government of Iran, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar met today in Tehran with Iranian President Ali-Akbar Hasemi Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

A United Nations Official told correspondents at Headquarters, that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar and the Iranian Foreign Minister had reviewed the various paragraphs of resolution 598 (1987), which remains to be fully implemented. They also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the Secretary-General expressed his concern that the situation there might deteriorate further. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of Iran for the support it has given to his five-point plan to bring stability to Afghanistan. The

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Secretary-General stressed his intention to have further discussions on the subject when he visits Saudi Arabia later this week.

Among other topics under discussion, the official said, were security arrangements for the Persian Gulf region with the Secretary-General stressing that it was for the countries of that region to coordinate their approach and their efforts. Also discussed in a general way were the latest developments in the Soviet Union and their effects on the United Nations membership.

Following his meeting with the Foreign Minister, the Secretary-General met with the Iranian President whom he informed of his efforts to implement the outstanding paragraphs of resolution 598 and to bring stability to Afghanistan. President Rafsanjani shared his views with the Secretary-General and also informed him of the effects on the Iranian economy of the destruction caused by the war with Iraq.

The Secretary-General then received at his residence members of families of four Iranian diplomats who disappeared in Lebanon in 1984. He told them that despite his numerous efforts on their behalf, he had been unable so far to obtain information of a positive nature, but that he would continue his diplomatic efforts. Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar emphazised that he was doing everything he could to solve the problem of detainees regardless of their nationality through his humanitarian mission.

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The Secretary-General has welcomed the decision of the Government of Guatemala to recognize the independent and sovereign State of Belize.

A United Nations official told correspondents today that Mr. Pérez de Cuellar considered this "an important step" towards the normalization of relations between the two neighbouring countries, the beneficial effects of which should extend to the political and economic aspects of the process of regional integration -- an objective which all Central American governments were seeking.

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This year's annual Conference of the Department of Public Information (DPI) for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) began today its three-day session at Headquarters.

Antoine Blanca, Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, said in an opening statement that in an interdependent world, the actions of Governments would be incomplete if they were not backed by non-governmental organizations. The United Nations was not only an organization of Governments, but of peoples, and thus the actions of non-governmental organizations were extremely important.

Mr. Blanca then read out a message sent by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in which the Secretary-General stated that as new vistas opened for countries to

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work together in ways they had not done before, the role of non-governmental organizations, which was laid down in the Charter, would surely become increasingly important.

During the conference, participants will discuss such questions as the search for peace in the emerging world order, promoting economic and social justice through development, and the interrelationship between peace, justice and development in the work of the United Nations.

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